

Georgia Sings!

AMERICAN
CHORAL
DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION 

The Official Newsletter of the Georgia Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association

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EVENTS...



TUNE YOUR HEARTS

American Choral Directors Association
**SOUTHERN REGION
CONFERENCE**
RALEIGH, NC
February 23-26, 2022

Online Registration Opens - October 7, 2021
Early-Bird Registration Ends - January 27, 2022

Early-Bird Member Pricing:

Active/Life - \$280

Retired - \$160

Student - \$75

From our President, Dr. Paul Neal, Georgia ACDA President, Page 3

From our President

Laura Martin, E.T. Booth Middle School, Director of Choral Activities, GA-ACDA President

Dear ACDA members-

I hope this letter finds you well. It has been exciting to hear of groups having their first performances and in person rehearsals since Covid began impacting our profession in March 2020. It has been wonderful to hear live music again!

I want to thank everyone who was able to attend our Georgia ACDA conference – whether virtually or in person. It was wonderful to see so many people together again. For many of us, it was the first time we had seen one another since March 2020. It was wonderful to hear laughter, see smiles behind masks, learn together, sing together, and hear live performances together again.

We were joined virtually by Dr. Allen Hightower from the University of North Texas as he presented two wonderful sessions to our attendees. We heard outstanding performances by the Ridgeland High School Chorale, the University of North Georgia Le Belle Voci, and Orpheus Men's Ensemble. Dr. Jennifer Sengin led a wonderful conducting masterclass for four undergraduate and graduate students from around our state. Our fantastic interest sessions were presented by Patrick Freer, Todd Wedge, Emily Floyd, and Elizabeth Fisher. We all came away with new repertoire ideas that were presented to us by our R&R chairs during reading sessions.



The ACDA board is in the planning stages for our 2022 conference – it is going to be an amazing conference! Please mark your calendars for **October 20-22, 2022** for our state conference. We will once again be holding the conference at Berry College in Rome, Georgia. The 2022 conference will mark the return of our Lifetime Learners choir as well as an honor choir for students in grades 8-12. We will also be accepting performing choir submissions as well as interest session submissions. Stay tuned for some exciting announcements regarding the conference!

I would like to extend a huge thank you to Paul Neal for all of his work in hosting our conference at Berry College and to Marielle Matthews, Steve Mulder and Craig Hurley for all of their work behind the scenes preparing for the conference.

I wish you all a joyous and happy holiday season filled with beautiful music making experiences.

Sincerely

Laura B. Martin

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A Message from Our Membership Chair

Dr. Chantae Pittman, Director of Choral Activities, Spivey Campbell High School, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Membership

Greetings GA-ACDA

By the time our newsletter goes out we will be just wrapping up our Membership Drive. Our goal, as always is to increase our state ACDA numbers from June 30th of this year. Our current goal this year is to move our membership forward by 10% getting up to 395 members. Please let your colleagues know about the great resources and benefits that come with being a member of ACDA. Beyond the fantastic in person national, regional, and state conferences there have been a wealth of virtual professional development that is still available. There are also tons of resources located on our national website regarding repertoire and resources for virtually any type of vocal ensemble. If you know of colleagues who may be on the fence about joining or renewing, please send them my way! We have been afforded 10 free membership vouchers for brand new ACDA members. What a great way to have a “test” run of all of the awesomeness that is ACDA.



New renewal options! For those of us who will renew in the coming months there is now a payment plan option to renew by credit card. More ways to continue your membership without worrying about paying a lot out of pocket at one time. Please visit www.acda.org and log in to check out the details.

Collegiate members! Student memberships are only \$15 for ALL student members both returning and new. This is a GREAT opportunity to build up your student chapters of pre-service choral conductors.

I hope each of you have been having a successful fall despite all of the continued craziness. Looking forward to you at our Southern Region conference in February. If you need to reach out please don't hesitate to email me at chantae.pittman@cobbk12.org.

Musically Yours,

Chantae

The Place of Sacred Music in a Secular Environment, Dr. Clell E. Wright, Director of Choral Activities, Valdosta State University, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for College and University Choirs, Page 5

The Place of Sacred Music in a Secular Environment

Dr. Clell E. Wright, Director of Choral Activities, Valdosta State University, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for College and University Choirs

Teaching at a state university now, after teaching at a faith based university for the better part of two decades, I find myself in an interesting position regarding my selection of choral repertoire for my choirs. How appropriate is the performance of sacred literature – particularly that of the Judea-Christian tradition – outside of a faith based setting? This article will not answer the question regarding sacred or secular music in schools but maybe it will generate discussion.

I have always tried to balance newly (or recently) composed music with historical choral music. I believe it is important for students to understand the great history and development of choral music, as well as its continued relevance today. However, the vast majority of historical choral music (outside of madrigals), and a significant amount of contemporary choral music, is of a sacred nature. The choral genre itself is largely a product of the church. It was birthed in the church, nurtured in the church, and found its greatest expression in the church. Even when the genre moved into the concert halls, it maintained its sacred associations. To this very day, choral music is closely associated with expressions of worship.



Choral music, for the most part, communicates text. It conveys meaning. That is a key component that makes choral music distinctive from instrumental music, and it is that component that I love. And because music has a way of relaying text in such a way as to make it more impactful, the text that we sing – in whatever language – will tend to make an impactful statement on both those who are performing it and those who are hearing it. How then do we perform music that expresses a faith and devotion that may lie outside the belief system of some of our performers or our audience? Or do we separate text from music altogether?

I find myself looking for literature with non-faith based poetry or finding ways to introduce sacred literature in such a way that it will speak both to those of faith and those whose beliefs differ or who have no sense of faith at all. This is the challenge. So far, I have had no complaints over any sacred compositions that I have programmed but I am waiting for that day to arrive. In the meantime, I am trying to balance my choral offerings to offer inspirational texts for performer and audience that will challenge them mentally, emotionally, and spiritually without promoting a particular system of beliefs.

I would love to hear from any of you who deal with this (don't we all). Maybe some of you have found the magic answer and are willing to share that with those of us still struggling through this. The answer may never be found and we may always be struggling of the issue. Until then, may we find ways to make our music in such a way that touches the soul of performer and audience alike.

Keep Singing,

Clell

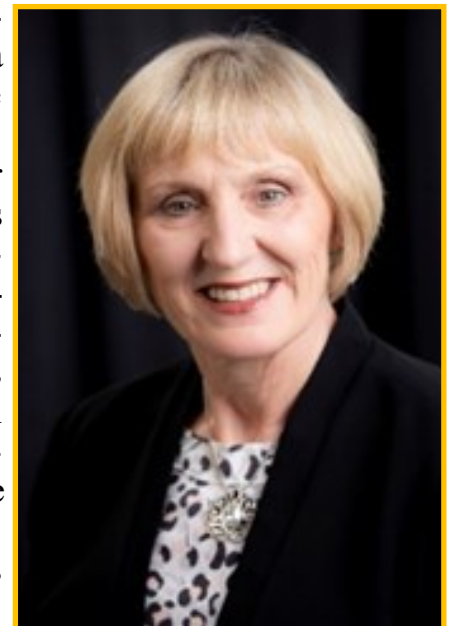
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Developing Community within Your Choral Ensemble, Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Assistant Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School, Page 6

Developing Community within Your Choral Ensemble

Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School

According to the Merriam Webster online dictionary, community is defined as “a unified body of individuals.” Developing a sense of community among choral ensembles is paramount to the success of the ensemble and is important now more than ever. Many students who sing in a choral ensemble are looking for their “place” where they can feel welcome and accepted. Numerous choral ensembles have had to meet virtually or on a hybrid schedule during the Covid pandemic. As a result of little or no face-to-face contact, this may have greatly diminished that sense of belongingness among members. Developing trust among members of the choir and trust between the director and singers can flourish if there is a concerted effort to develop community. As our country’s immigrant population grows, our choral ensembles will be filled with students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Recognizing and celebrating the differences among the singers will certainly assist in the effort to unify the choir.



As choral directors, the task of developing community within our singers begins with us. It is important that the director take the time to develop relationships with all singers in the ensemble. This should begin with quickly learning the names of all the singers. Arriving at rehearsals early to speak with singers as they arrive can go a long way with developing those relationships. Directors who teach in a school setting should stand at the door and greet each student as they enter. Find something specific to say, perhaps complimenting them on something they are wearing or a new hairstyle. Know what other activities your singers are involved in and announce successes to the rest of the ensemble. Pay attention to the school announcements and point out any choir members who may have been highlighted in those announcements and congratulate them.

Membership...

[Like us on Facebook for news and updates from our membership.](#)



Encourage others to become a more active and informed part of our choral family in Georgia and join ACDA. Membership for all chapters of ACDA is handled via the National Office. Visit [Membership Central](#) for more information.

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Developing Community within Your Choral Ensemble, Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Assistant Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School, Page 7

in front of the class. This is especially important to the special learners who may be in your choir. Make an effort to attend school or community events in which your students may have a part, such as athletic events, plays, and cheerleading or robotics competitions. Your actions will be a model to your students and will encourage them to be supportive of each other.

One of the best ways to encourage community among your students is to have a weekly or twice a week share time. This can be very simple and can take little time away from the rehearsal. Take five minutes out of the middle of a rehearsal or two each week and have students share pre-announced information. Place all singers' names in a jar and draw two or three names out for each session. Share topics can include what they like about choir, their favorite movie and why, their most embarrassing moment, what their favorite song is and why, or the person that has been a positive influence in their life. Encourage the designated singer to stand and have the other singers turn and look at the person as they are speaking.

Take time, perhaps at the beginning of each semester or after a concert, to have a team-building activity. One idea is to give each student a "dum dum" sucker as they come in the door. Divide the students into groups based on the flavor or color of the sucker they were given. Assign each group a question that each student in the group should answer. Question examples could be "Who is your favorite performer?", "What is your favorite animal?", "What do you most like to do in your spare time?" or "Other than choir, what is your most favorite class?". Another great activity is to divide the class in half and have them form two concentric circles with students facing each other. Flash questions on the white board or overhead and have students share the answer to those questions to the person standing in front of them. Play music on the piano with the circles moving in opposite directions. When the music stops, the students should find a new partner to share with. Many other great team-building or ice-breaker activities can be found in *Teachers Pay Teachers* or by searching the internet.

Many other activities can assist with building community within your choral ensembles. Designate a Friday out of each six weeks or quarter as "Performance Friday." Students can sign up to perform an appropriate song of their choice for the class. This allows the singers the opportunity to perform and express themselves through the music they have chosen. It is important to communicate with the other students the importance of respect during the performances. Phones should not be out, students should be attentive and not talking and should applaud at the end of each

Did you know ACDA has it's own *radio station*?

- [ACDA RADIO](#) is an online radio station broadcasted live from the ACDA National Office
- Recordings are brought to you directly by NAXOS
- ACDA members must login to listen!

Developing Community within Your Choral Ensemble, Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Assistant Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School, Page 8

performance. Highlight the multi ethnicities in your class by having a concert devoted to multiethnic music. Try to include music representative of the singers in your ensemble and invite those singers to share customs of their culture. They may also be able to help with pronunciation of the text. Have your class complete group composition projects or group performance projects. This is a great activity at the end of the school year or semester after the last concert. Allow students to choose one partner to work with and then separate the ensemble into groups which include varying ability levels. Students may compose a song (with specific guidelines and parameters supplied by you) or they can arrange a chosen song for an a cappella performance. Groups perform for each other and offer constructive feedback using a rubric. After-school social activities for your ensembles such as pizza parties, holiday parties, movie night or other activities are especially fun and greatly contribute to the establishment of community within your choral program.

Though some of these activities will take time out of your day-to-day rehearsals, the benefits of developing community within your ensembles will certainly be beneficial. Students who share a sense of belongingness may be more motivated and engaged in rehearsals resulting in higher quality performances. These students will be your recruiters and will help you grow the choral program by encouraging their friends to join. For many students, the positive experiences they have in choir may be the highlight of their day and the only time they truly feel connected to others. As choral directors, our primary focus should always be on the well-being of the members of our ensembles and encouraging unity among our singers is an essential part of our role.

For questions or additional information about the activities presented, contact Dr. Karen Graffius at kgraffiu@westga.edu

**Need a job? Want to fill a position? Visit our blog at the
GA-ACDA website.**

If you want to post a listing, email Nathan at schreernj@fultonschools.org.

Mics, Speakers, and Amps! Oh My!, Karen Davis, Appling County High School, Director of Choral Activities, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Jazz and Show Choirs, Page 9

Mics, Speakers, and Amps! Oh My!

Karen Davis, Appling County High School, Director of Choral Activities, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Jazz and Show Choirs

So you have finally decided to start a show choir or jazz choir. You choose your members, start rehearsing, but now, you are faced with planning your first performance and now you realize that the way you mic your concert choir is not working for your jazz or show choir. What now? Show choir and jazz choir performances are different from the traditional concert choir programs. With a concert choir, the goal is to mostly mic the overall choir sound and solos usually do not use solo mics, but rely on individual projection. Show Choir and jazz choirs often use multiple instruments of which some use amps and can overpower the choir. Show choirs also are more spread out because they incorporate dance in their performances. So, how do you effectively mic for these choirs?

There is some basic audio equipment that is necessary for your choirs. Several microphones, a mixer, amps, speakers, monitors, and cables are all part of the system needed.

One of the most important parts of your system is purchasing the correct microphones for what you need. There are several different types of microphones available so it is important to know the difference between them to ensure you have the correct one for your group. Each type of microphone has a polar pattern (the pattern that determines which direction a mic will be sensitive to picking up sound and which directions a mic will reject sound). Determining how you want to use each microphone is a crucial first step. If you plan to have every singer hold their own microphone, a cardioid microphone that picks up sound from the front and rejects sound from behind would be your best choice. These mics work best in live sound situations, and since you are working with students, dynamic microphones that are made to be rugged and inexpensive, are often a good choice. When using sound for concert choirs, a condenser microphone which is more sensitive and picks up better from a distance, is a better choice. For show choirs, the addition of choreography adds a complication for your sound engineer (which sometimes means you, since most of us don't have the luxury of having a sound engineer). One microphone which has worked extremely well for my show choir has been a shotgun mic. Shotgun mics are typically used for television/movie work. They have a polar pattern that has an extremely narrow directional pattern and it works for long distances. My choir uses five shotgun mics placed eight feet apart at mouth level and placed about four feet from the first row of singers. In addition to the shotgun mics, we use cardioid dynamic microphones for solos. Every choir has its own specific needs, determining how you plan to use the microphones is your first step to choosing the correct microphone for your choir.

Another must-have for your sound system is a good digital sound mixer. The mixer is used to modify the sound from multiple microphones and instruments to create a clean mix. When purchasing your mixer you need to know how many microphones you plan to use to determine the size of board that you



purchase. Count the number of microphones you plan to use and add the number of instruments you plan to use and channels for tracks and/videos, then add some extra channels, you will quite often need more channels than you originally thought.

The next item you will need to invest in is amplifiers. Amplifiers boost the signal coming from the microphones and send it out to the speakers as a stronger sound.

Now that you have a mixer, amps, and microphones, you will need a way for the sound to convert from an electrical signal to vibrations that humans can hear. This is done by the speakers. You will need at least two speakers placed on either side of the front of the choir, slightly in front of the microphones and monitors. Never place the speakers behind the monitors or microphones. This will cause a very loud unpleasant squeal called feedback. Always avoid pointing a microphone toward a speaker or a monitor to spare yourself from heads turning in your direction wondering what you are doing wrong! You will also need a special type of speaker called a subwoofer which can be placed anywhere. Subwoofers project the low frequencies of your sound and the speakers project the mids and highs. Low frequencies are not directional so therefore you can place the subwoofer anywhere and the sound will carry throughout the room. The speakers on the other hand are directional. Be careful where you place the speakers. Wherever they are pointed will receive the majority of the sound. The last type of speaker you will need is two monitors. These are small speakers that you will point back toward your choir so that they can hear themselves, the instruments, and/or tracks that you play. You will need at least two monitors equally spaced in front of your choir.

Now you have all the equipment for your system, but you still need a few more items. Each of these pieces must be connected to each other using cables. Microphones use XLR cables. These cables are balanced cables that allow for longer cable lengths without external noise. If you have guitars, bass guitars, and/or keyboards, you will also use 1/4" cables which are unbalanced chords and must be less than 20 feet or they will have external noise. To lengthen your space from the instruments, you can purchase direct boxes, which convert an unbalanced cable to a balanced cable. The 1/4" cable will go from the guitar to the direct box and then an XLR will come from the direct box to your mixer. There are also thicker 1/4" cables used for speakers, subwoofers, and monitors, they are called speaker cables. You will need a cable for each microphone, instrument, speaker, and monitor in your system.

The last items that you will need are a mic and speaker stands. These stands will hold your microphones and speakers at the height that you need them to be placed. You may also want a rack for your mixer and amplifiers which will make it easier to travel. Lastly, the purchase of a snake, a cable that contains individual audio cables inside an outer jacket. This is used so that you can have your mixer board toward the back of the room from the stage area instead of being in the front and center of your group.

All of this may seem overwhelming, but there are many businesses that can help you put the pieces of your system together. Knowing what pieces you need is important when you talk to professionals so that they understand what you need. And now, you are finally ready to put your first show together with your new system.

Publicize in Our Newsletter, Page 11

All choral organizations are encouraged to publicize in our newsletter!

Georgia Sings! Is a great place to let our choral community know about your organizations and events!

- Our newsletter is published in color, not grayscale, you can include color in your ad!
- If you want to include a written article or column in your advertisement, we reserve the right to place a disclaimer such as “*This is an advertisement*” somewhere in the ad.
- You may request for your ad to be placed before or after a certain article or section, but please be understanding of changes that must be made for the best layout.
- You may request a border for your ad, but please be understanding of changes that must be made for a visually appealing page.
- There is a discount for ACDA members from any state chapter. Non-members such as businesses are invited to advertise in our newsletter.
- If you know of other organizations from other states, please invite them to advertise in *Georgia Sings!*
- The Fall edition is published by Nov. 1; the Spring edition is published by May 15.
- Purchase Forms and ad designs are due by Oct. 1 for the Fall issue, and April 1 for the Spring issue.
- Advertisements can be purchased in 1/4 page, 1/2 page vertical, 1/2 page horizontal, or full page sizes.
- Advertisers can design their own ad!

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